UNIVERSITY *of York*
The Department of Health Sciences

ASSESSMENT GUIDELINE

Module Title	Dissertation (Public Health, Health Research, Mental Health Research)		
Module Code	HEA00184M	Module Level*	7
Word Limit /Exam Duration	10,000 words	Assessment Type(s)	Dissertation

Marking Criteria
Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the marking criteria guidance for the module level* noted above:
http://www.york.ac.uk/healthsciences/student-intranet/exam-assess/markgrid/

Confidentiality
It is a breach of confidentiality to disclose any personal information about a patient, service user, colleague, staff or any other person or place that could in principle enable them to be identified. For further guidance please refer to the departmental policy on Confidentiality at the following link: www.york.ac.uk/healthsciences/student-intranet/exam-assess/conduct/confidentiality/

Assessment Timing
The deadline for correctly presenting a submission is 4.30pm on the published submission date.
The submission deadline is published on the Programme Assessment Schedule available on the following link:
http://www.york.ac.uk/healthsciences/student-intranet/timetables/assessment-schedules/

Referencing
You **must** reference your work in accordance with departmental referencing guidelines which you can access via the following link: http://www.york.ac.uk/integrity/harvard.html

Assessment Guidance
More guidance is provided in the document *"Completing a Masters' Dissertation in the Department of Health Sciences"* which can be found in the Dissertation Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Formative assessment
You will be asked to submit a proposal for your dissertation identifying the topic, the method and your experience and expertise (practical skills, professional experience, modules chosen that will support the dissertation). This will be via a structured template (Google Form) with word limits for each section. The proposal will include the following information:

- Preliminary working title
- The focus of your project
- The evidence, policy or practice gap your research is addressing, and why this is an important issue to address
- Methods (Type of approaches and methodologies you will use)
- Your existing experience and expertise, and any academic modules you have undertaken, that have relevance to the topic and methods you have selected.

Summative assessment

You will undertake an independent study resulting in a dissertation that brings together the learning from the programme and demonstrates your ability to transfer this learning and critically appraise literature, reports and methods. The maximum word length for this piece of work is **10,000 words.**

Although the exact focus of your dissertation may differ depending on the programme you are undertaking, your dissertation should include background to the research topic and a critical appraisal of the current evidence base. It should outline the study design and methodology you have selected, as well as your analytical strategy. You will need to outline your research findings and provide a discussion, including recommendations (for further research and where relevant for practice), potential real-world impact, dissemination and limitations.

Your work should therefore include the following sections, alongside further information relating to formatting such as title, contents and a list of any tables and figures included. Further detail on each is available in the dissertation VLE which you should refer to during completion of your dissertation:

- **Abstract:** A summary of your study using a structured format (e.g. background, methods, results, discussion and conclusions). This should not exceed 300 words and is not included in the overall word count.
- **Introduction and background:** to include an understanding of the literature; why this topic is important to research; the evidence, policy or practice gap your research is addressing; and the focus of your project.
- **Method:** should provide a detailed description of the research design, data collection, and analysis procedures used in the study. When appropriate, it should also include reporting systems and frameworks to ensure transparency and replicability.
- **Results/findings:** to present a narrative and critical analytical presentation of your results; where appropriate to include tables, charts and figures summarising your results.
- **Discussion:** to summarise your dissertation findings; to draw together additional literature that helps to put your research into the context and findings of other relevant studies. To consider the limitations of your own methodology and project; to review the research, practice and policy implications of your work and the recommendations that flow from this. Where appropriate, to consider how your findings could be disseminated/implemented to offer real-world impact.
- **Conclusion:** Drawing together a summary of your key findings to finish
- **Appendices**
- **References**

Please use the following guidance:
- Use double-spaced, Arial point 12 throughout the main text
- All pages, tables and figures should be numbered
- University of York Harvard Referencing system
- A table of contents should be provided
- We would advise that around 5 tables and 5 figures should be included; maximum 5 supplementary A4 pages

Everything in the main body of the text (i.e. Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion, Conclusion) *apart from* tables and figures is included in your word limit. Everything before the main text (e.g. Abstract, Acknowledgements, Contents) and after it (e.g. References, Appendices) is not included.

Date last reviewed: February 2026 Reviewers: David Barrett; Alex Smith; PG programme leadership teams	Date last updated: 3rd February, 2026	Date last reviewed by External Examiner: